



National Archives at Kansas City Newsletter

Upcoming Virtual Programs at the National Archives

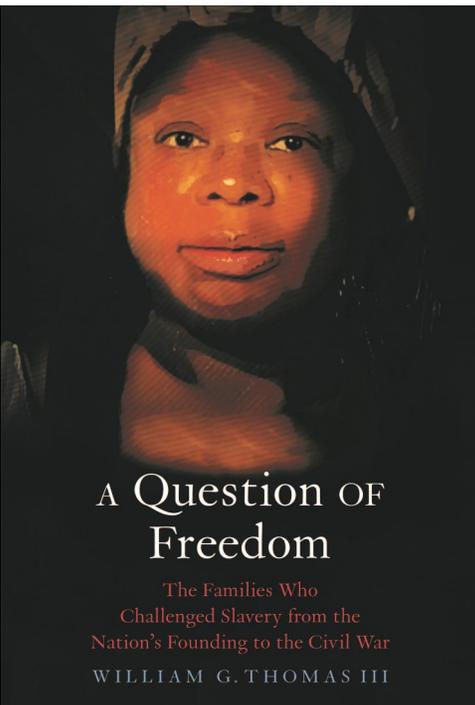
The National Archives is continuing to offer a full slate of public programs in November. An extensive list can be found [here](#). Below are two, a film screening and an author lecture. All programs are scheduled according to Eastern Standard Time.

On **Thursday, November 12 at 7:00 p.m. EST**, the National Archives will offer a film screening of **Memphis Belle: The Restoration**. This **free program** can be viewed via live stream on the National Archives [YouTube Channel](#).

On May 17, 1943, the crew of the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress Memphis Belle successfully completed their 25th and final mission. Famed Hollywood director William Wyler, then a major in the United States Army Air Forces, and his crew shot over 15 hours of footage that would become the documentary, *Memphis Belle: The Story of a Flying Fortress*. In 2018, in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the final flight, the National Archives partnered with Vulcan Productions and Creative Differences to digitally preserve the film and outtakes. Following the screening, National Archives Supervisory Motion Picture Preservation Specialist **Criss Austin** will moderate a discussion with **Catherine Wyler**, film producer and daughter of William Wyler, and filmmaker **Erik Nelson**, who collaborated on the restoration and used the outtake footage in his 2018 documentary *The Cold Blue*.



Above: The Memphis Belle airplane.



On **Monday, November 30 at 12:00 p.m. EST**, the National Archives will host **William G. Thomas, III** for a lecture on his book **A Question of Freedom: The Families Who Challenged Slavery from the Nation's Founding to the Civil War**. This **free program** can be viewed via live stream on the National Archives [YouTube Channel](#).

For over seventy years and five generations, the enslaved families of Prince George's County, Maryland, filed hundreds of suits for their freedom against a powerful circle of slaveholders, taking their cause all the way to the Supreme Court. Between 1787 and 1861, these lawsuits challenged the legitimacy of slavery in American law and put slavery on trial in the nation's capital. Thomas, the Department of History Chairman at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, recounts the story of the longest and most complex legal challenge to slavery in American history.

November 2020

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Upcoming Events

Unless noted, all events are held at the National Archives 400 W. Pershing Road Kansas City, MO 64108

NOTE: All in-person public events at National Archives facilities nationwide are cancelled until further notice. This includes in-person public programs, tours, school group visits, public meetings, external conferences, and facility rentals.

Hidden Treasures from the Stacks

All Together Now: The Mid-Central War Resources Board Prepares for War

The United States in 1940 and 1941 was a nation in transition. The 1930s had been a decade of economic devastation with the Great Depression destroying countless businesses and putting millions out of work. By 1940, the country was mostly out of the depression, though its effects were still seen across the nation, particularly with continued high unemployment rates. Big businesses began to see a boom from war production, producing and selling equipment of all types to supply overseas allies fighting the Axis and a US military preparing for war. While big companies received a boost, small employers risked being left behind. Small businesses needed a push out of the economic doldrums left from the 1930s, and war production was a possible avenue to provide forward momentum.

The challenge facing many small manufacturers was their production capacity. Without large assembly lines, they could not competitively bid for contracts to produce the various parts needed to supply the Allied war effort. A struggling civilian economy led many small businesses to seek a way into the war production chain, even with their limitations. Innovation was needed, and Lou Holland and the Mid-Central War Resources Board answered the call.

Lou Holland was a successful businessman in Kansas City, Missouri, and an ambassador for industrial growth in the region. Holland spent time as the president of the city's Chamber of Commerce and had connections with companies large and small across the Midwest. Lou Holland's passion for local business and knowledge of employers across the region helped him play a key role in 1940, in establishing the Mid-Central War Resources Board, with the headquarters based in Kansas City, Missouri. The purpose of the board was to explore opportunities for small Midwest companies to pool production capabilities and receive contracts to produce goods for the armed forces. A starting point in realizing this goal was to determine what businesses were interested in participating, and what resources each company had at their disposal. Surveys created and disseminated across the region. These surveys asked each company to report how many people they employed, what type and numbers of equipment they possessed, and what type and quantities of goods they produced. In addition to the surveys, advertisements were distributed to broaden the reach of information gathered.

The Midwest-Central War Resources Board received a wave of responses to their call to small businesses. Manufacturing companies not only sent back the surveys, but included business brochures and pictures of their facilities and workers, highlighting their capabilities to produce. Individuals that did not receive surveys sent letters to the board, often expressing the desire and capability to help in the war effort. An example of this is a response from L.A. Adams Machine Shop in Independence, Missouri. Mr. Adams sent a letter on December 19, 1940, to report he had a home machine shop, with one lathe, two drill presses, one acetylene welding outfit, one electric welding outfit, and a complete blacksmith shop, all of which Adams reported was available for national defense.

Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, the United States was not united in opinion on supporting the Allied war effort. Groups such as the America First Committee held non-intervention rallies that were attended by tens of thousands. There was a sizable portion of the population that pushed for the country to stay out of the war and from providing supplies, even if it meant less business for their company in a struggling economy. This was evident in the letters received by the board. James Johnson, from Detroit, Michigan, sent his reply to Lou Holland on January 6, 1941. In contrast to L.A. Adams, Mr. Johnson wrote appealing against any participation in the war, stating that he hoped the new year would keep "our beloved country uncursed by wholesale bloodletting. There are challenges enough in our democratic faults to be overcome by the moral equivalent of war, without getting out the guns."

Regardless of the divided opinions of the nation, the Mid-Central War Resources Board pushed forward, and managed to marshal enough resources to earn defense production contracts. The Board selected manufacturers from the surveys and correspondence it received, and together these businesses formed the Mid-Central Associated Defense Industries, Incorporated. In 1941, these small manufacturing businesses across the Midwest began to produce parts to support military preparedness efforts. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, virtually all opposition to United States participation in the war disappeared, and the nation's economy united to support the war effort. The Mid-Central Associated Defense Industries did its part, making, among other products, sighting apparatus for naval guns, and parts that were used on Higgins Boats. Both of these items played key roles in battles such as D-Day (Operation Overlord). By 1945, Lou Holland and many companies thought too small to make a difference in preparing for American involvement in the war, had worked together to help defeat the Axis. More information about the Mid-Central War Resources Board can be found in the [National Archives Catalog](#).

Independence, Mo.

Dec. 19 - 1940

Mr. Lou E. Holland

X✓
Home

Here is a list of my metal
working tools

1 16 inch x 8 foot lathe

2 20 inch drill presses

1 acetylene welding outfit

1 electric welding outfit

Complete blacksmith shop
in connection.

Yours for National defence

L. A. Adams Machine shop

410 N. Main st.

The Whittier
Burns Drive
Detroit

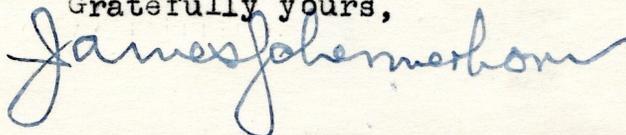
January 6th, 1941.

My dear Lou:

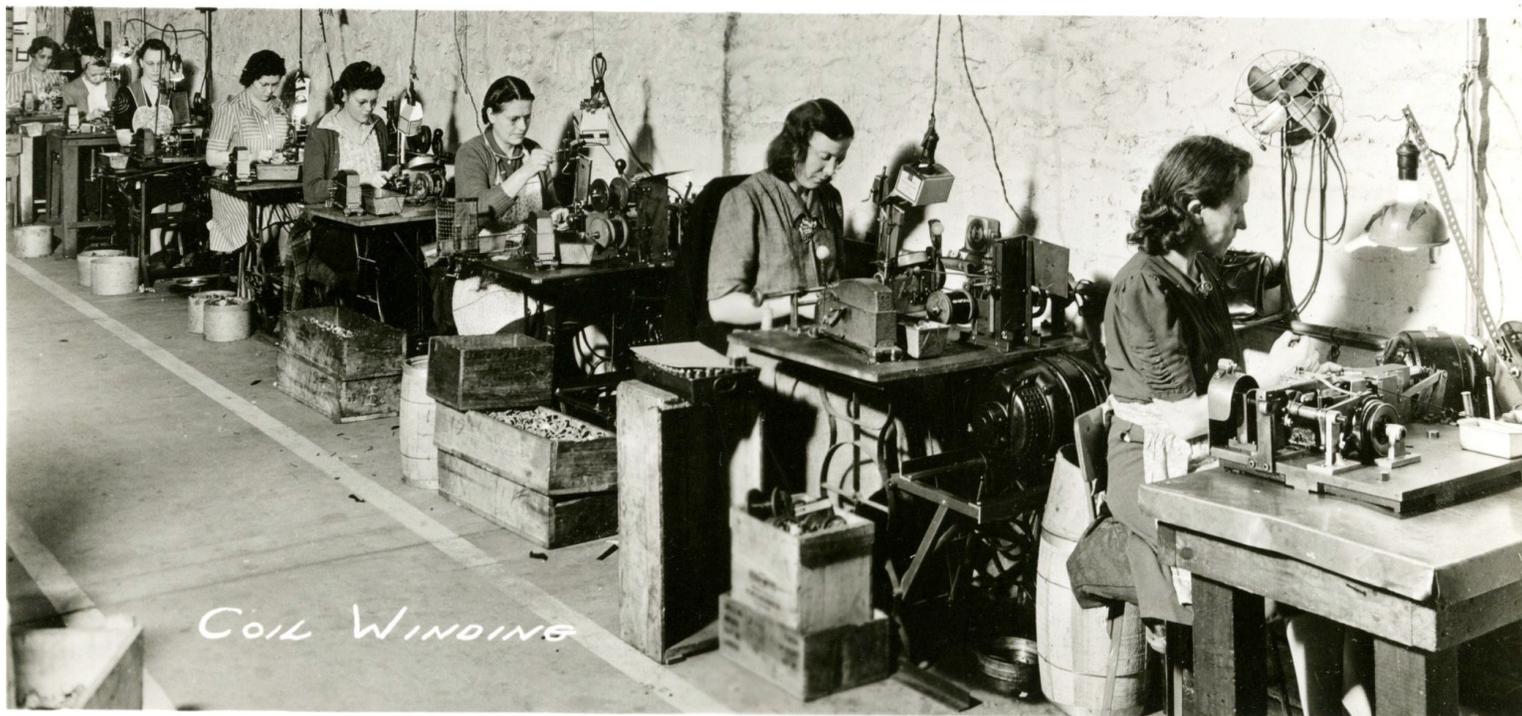
And along with "The Holiday Spirit," which your Christmas remembrance inspired, came the Convention Spirit which brought us together in high-purposed fellowship in years gone. So I am indebted to you for a double blessing; and I fervently trust new-born 1941 will deal bountifully with you and yours, the while keeping our beloved Country uncursed by wholesale bloodletting.

There are challenges enough in our democratic faults to be overcome by the moral equivalent of war, without getting out the guns.

Gratefully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Mr. and Mrs. Lou E. Holland,
Kansas City,
Missouri.



Above: Photograph from the Electra Manufacturing Company, Kansas City, Missouri, undated. Collection MCWR, Records of Mid-Central War Resources Board.; General Records, 1940-1942; Group F. National Archives Identifier 40571357.

Fall Online Learning for Educators and Students

Join us online for interactive learning programs! In partnership with the Presidential Primary Sources Project, we are offering programs for students in grades K-12 and for educators looking for professional development. All programs are scheduled according to Eastern Standard Time. To sign up for any of the sessions below, visit the [Distance Learning Sign Up Page](#).

- Tuesday, November 3: Symbols of the Presidency at 2:00 p.m. EST

Using President Reagan as an example, students will explore and engage with the symbols of the American Presidency. (Aimed at grades 1-4)

- Thursday, November 5: Unofficial Roles of the President at 2:00 p.m. EST

By examining President Reagan as an example, students will explore the unofficial role of the President of the United States (Aimed at grades 6-8)

- Tuesday, November 10: Choosing a President's Cabinet at 2:00 p.m. EST

Students will explore the role of the cabinet as it is explained in the Constitution and how it has evolved over time. (Aimed at grades 9-12)

Right: President Ronald Reagan during a cabinet meeting in the Cabinet Room on September 3, 1985. White House Photographic Collection, 1/20/1981 - 1/20/1989 Reagan White House Photographs. National Archives Identifier 75854273.



National Archives Facility Information Regarding COVID-19

(updated as of October 29, 2020)

The National Archives is committed to the health and safety of our visitors and staff. We are continuing to monitor the situation regarding COVID-19. National Archives staff will continue to serve the public remotely by responding to emailed requests for records and [History Hub](#) inquiries. While we are closed, we invite the public to explore our online resources by visiting www.archives.gov and viewing our [online exhibits](#) and [educational resources](#) and participating in our [Citizen Archivist Missions](#).

Finally, all in-person public programs and events are suspended through December 31, 2020. We will continue to update the public as agency guidance becomes available. Follow the National Archives at Kansas City on [Facebook](#) or on Twitter [@KCArchives](#).



GENERAL INFORMATION: The National Archives is open Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Closed on weekends and Federal holidays. Hours are subject to change due to special programs and weather.

The National Archives is located at 400 West Pershing Road, Kansas City, Missouri, 64108, and is home to historical records dating from the 1820s to the 1990s created or received by Federal agencies in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

For more information, call 816-268-8000, email kansascity.educate@nara.gov or visit www.archives.gov/kansas-city. Tweet us [@KCArchives](#). Follow us on Instagram at [kansascity.archives](#). Find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/nationalarchiveskansascity.